

BLACK HAWK FREEDOM
BY 1LT Luis Pauli
(May 31-June 7)

The Black Hawk's Mission has started to solidify. First, we will conduct stability and support operations in their area of responsibility. We are to provide a safe and secure environment that facilitates a transition to an Iraqi-run government. We will conduct limited attacks and raids to destroy hostile forces threatening security, infrastructure, and civilians. The End-state is for us to leave Iraq and its people more self-sufficient. We must make every effort to allow the Iraqi people to secure, support, and rule themselves.

The Squadron Commander, LTC Charles Williams, addressed the leaders, "a foothold has been established, and we must keep the cavalry tradition of always moving and taking action!" This stability and support operation was not what we have been training for this past year. This is not a straight up fight, but a many faceted fight aimed at getting the Iraqi people back on their feet and eventually surviving.

Protecting our soldiers is our number one priority. We all live within compounds with large thick walls encircling the troopers. Tanks and Bradleys stand ready guarding the entrances so there is little to fear of being attacked. We are well equipped, we are well housed, we are better led, and in spite of MRE's, we are better fed!

We are determined to establish a secure environment. We are here to protect the innocent and establish law and order. A proclamation among the new Iraqi population was ordained. In order to establish public order and safety in Iraq, the coalition provisional authority directed a New Iraq weapons policy that banned large weapons and automatic assault rifles. The 1-1 CAV will enforce the prohibition through weapons seizures and personnel apprehensions and detentions, taking those violators to jail.

Black Hawk troopers worked hard in preparing weapon collection points. The overall intent was not to disarm the entire population of firearms, but to mitigate a threat to coalition forces in Iraq. Meanwhile, patrols continued to roll non-stop and the basic laws that govern the U.S. were to be upheld here in Iraq. We are focused on ensuring that the civilians in our area know that we are firm, fair, and unbiased when we deal with them.

We will consistently focus on securing and supporting infrastructure development. The 16th Engineers, attached to the squadron, continue working on the removal of what seems an endless amount of UXO's. A thundering explosion in our quiet backdrop resounds daily as we destroy another weapons and ammo cache.

1-1 CAV has been working hard to get a water pump station on the Tigris River working. The plan is to get the water into our zone and fill local farming, so Iraqi's could irrigate and replenish the thirst of the crops in their community.

We coordinated for Cesspool Trucks and front loaders to pick up sewage and trash in one of the local neighborhoods. The Squadron Commander along with his Civil Affairs team, stressed to the community leader, Imam Sheik Makah Marhmound Shaker Sudan, the importance of taking "action" and how Americans and Iraqi's must take action instead of meeting, talking, and planning all the time.



Trash removal: Al Furat Neighborhood; June 2003

Other key issues discussed with the Imam Sudan included establishing a police station, and hiring a police force, composed roughly of thirty officers. School supplies continued being delivered in preparation for the upcoming school semester. Medical supplies have arrived in abundance and the Imam was informed on how he could replenish the local hospital.



Handing out school supplies, Baghdad, Iraq: June 2003

In order to achieve credibility with the local populace, we let them know what we are doing. We are writing a weekly newsletter at 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne, and it is translated into Arabic. It describes all the things we are doing for the Iraqi people in our zone. Once we have the majority of the local population on our side, our tasks will begin to get easier. Information dominance will be the key to gaining cooperation from civilians.

The Air Cavalry, still attached to 4th Brigade, has soared above Black Hawk airwaves again. The pilots returned ground troop hand waves with warm waves of their own. The Air became additional eyes and firepower from the sky helping the squadron on a mission to catch illegal weapons last week.



Black Hawk Re-enlistment; June 2003

The reenlistment of two soldiers ended the week in patriotic fashion. SPC Harris and SPC Bauer, both decided to re-enlist, and will proudly continue the privilege of protecting their country. SSG Martin, the Squadron Career Counselor declared, “good soldiers like this reenlisting on the battlefield, you can’t beat it.”

And so the Black hawk will continue its 24-hour operations into the weekend, under the steaming hue of heat; always the trooper carrying the memory of his loved ones he has left so far away. The Black Hawk has the rare privilege of writing a positive page in the history of this land, that is the birthplace of civilization. BLACK HAWK!

FLASHBACK!! HEROES TO REMEMBER!!

BY 1LT Luis Pauli

When 1-1Cav was on the move a few weeks ago the Headhunter Maintenance Platoon shined like all-stars! SFC Carlos Abellas and his platoon were responsible for making sure the 147-vehicle convoy made the 395-mile trip from Camp Udairi to Baghdad, Iraq. Their ability to plan, resource, and just plain fix any Army vehicle with some bubble-gum and chicken wire was instrumental in the Squadron’s movement into Iraq. After 36 hours nearly 400 miles, not a single vehicle broke down. While the long hours and lack of sleep resulted in a few minor fender-benders, the Headhunter Maintenance Platoon was always the first on the scene with one of their recovery vehicles, ready and able to lend a hand.

The recovery teams of SGT Domaskin, SPC Setser, SGT Lowery, SPC Miller, SGT Conter, and SPC Covert were invaluable assets in making the Division’s first

movement to Iraq successful. LTC Charles Williams awarded the platoon Squadron Coins to thank them for their hard work. These ‘fix it’ men definitely will be instrumental to our future success in Iraq.

Enjoy a few pics of our soldiers and our area.



Baghdad International Airport: “Fallen Monster”; June 2003



L to R: SSG Martin, SGT Gutierrez



Apache Troop, “step out of the vehicle”: June 2003, Baghdad, Iraq